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TITLE: An STD/HIV Prevention Program Targeting Client-Centered Populations in High-Risk Communities

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BACKGROUND/OBJECTIVES: In an effort to continue and expand the successful results of targeted educational interventions among female bar workers and their managers/supervisors in the Philippines, high-risk, client-centered populations are currently being identified.

METHODS: A cross-lagged panel study design is currently being implemented in four sites in the southern Philippines, comprised of high-risk client-centered populations (military/policemen, firemen, factory workers, drivers associations taxi and tricycle drivers) and high-risk communities. Approximately 200 males from each of five study groups (total of 2500 males) have provided baseline information on their knowledge, attitudes and practices concerning STD/HIV risk factors. From this group, 20 individuals are being trained as peer counselors to educate and reinforce safe sexual practices in the specific intervention site.

RESULTS: Knowledge concerning STD transmission and prevention was significantly higher among military/police compared to taxi and tricycle drivers (85% correct knowledge vs. 60% correct knowledge; $p < .01$). Attitudes towards condom use were identified as the most significant concern among all study groups. Peer counselors are developing specific educational materials based on the findings within their target group. The most popular type of information is the *phonovella*, which depicts photos and stories of site-specific individuals. Other materials consist of posters, stickers and flyers. Both intervention and control study sites are followed for a 12-month period, then a post-test assessment, followed by intervention in the previous control site and monitoring in the previous study site. A final follow-up assessment is conducted at the end of the 24-month period.

CONCLUSIONS: The concept of training peer counselors in targeted study groups has been well supported by various program managers. Educational materials are being distributed and shared with similar organizations in the community, including other factory workers, drivers associations and residential communities in which bars, nightclubs and massage parlors are located. Management is coordinating educational policy consisting of STD/HIV prevention training programs and seminars for their respective employees.

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